

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD  
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886



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Board of Finance  
Budget Hearing Minutes \*REVISED\*

Wednesday, March 4, 2024  
Waterford Town Hall

- Present:** Chairman Glenn Patterson, Ronald R. Fedor, Michael Rocchetti, Robert Tuneski, David Peabody, Joseph Filippetti
- Absent:** Bill Sheehan
- Elected:** Robert J. Brule, First Selectman
- Staff:** Kimberly Allen, Finance Director; Dani Gorman, Human Services Administrator Youth & Family Services & Senior Services; Terry Wheeler, Assistant Director Senior Services; Heidi McSwain Human Services Coordinator Youth & Family Services & Senior Services; Meghan Lineburgh, Senior Services Assistant; Joseph Trelli, Program Coordinator Youth Services; Brendan Smith, Youth & Family Services; Ryan T. McNamara, Director Recreation & Parks, Timothy Cieplik, Program Coordinator Recreation & Parks; Rebecca Hall, Admin Assistant Finance Office/BOF Recording Secretary
- Other:** Chris Nailon, Ethics Commission Representative; Anita Collins, Senior Citizen Commission, Joyce Vlaun, Co-Vice Chair Senior Citizen Commission; Jennifer Muggeo, Ledge Light Health District

1. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:  
A quorum was established and a call to order was established at 7:01 pm, March 4, 2024.

2. Public comment:  
An opening statement regarding the budget process was made by Glenn Patterson, Chairman.

**Standing Motion:** A motion was made by Ron Fedor and seconded by Robert Tuneski to have a standing motion by Robert Tuneski and seconded by Ron Fedor to consider each budget as presented.

**Vote:** 6-0-0

**Motion:** Passed

3. Ethics Commission Budget:

**Motion** by Robert Tuneski and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to tentatively approve the Ethics Commission budget request for FY24/25 in the total amount of \$900.

**Vote:** 6-0-0

**Motion:** Passed

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
WATERFORD, CT  
2024 APR - 21 P 3:00 PM  
ATTEST: David J. L...  
TOWN CLERK

**4. Conservation of Health Budget:**

Opening remarks by Jennifer Muggeo, Ledge Light Health District to present the requested budget. Michael Rocchetti initiated discussion regarding the per capita rate and comparison of the Town of Waterford's rate to East Lyme's rate.

It was mentioned by Ms. Muggeo that Ledge Light receives a very minimal amount from the state for health care in southeastern Connecticut. Given that circumstance and the fact that COVID relief funding is no longer available, she anticipated that the per capita rates would rise in FY26.

**Motion** by Robert Tuneski and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to tentatively approve the Conservation of Health budget request for FY24/25 in the total amount of \$148,407.

**Vote: 6-0-0**

**Motion: Passed**

**5. Public Health Nursing Services Budget:**

The Visiting Nurses Association was unable to provide a representative at this date and time due to scheduling conflicts. Glenn Patterson suggested moving this item to Wednesday, March 6, 2024 Budget Hearing date.

**Motion** by Dave Peabody and **seconded** by Joseph Filippetti to table the Public Health Nursing Services budget request for FY24/25 to a future Budget Hearing Meeting date.

**Vote: 6-0-0**

**Motion: Passed**

**6. Social Services Grants Budget:**

Ron Fedor opened the discussion as the Board of Finance Liaison to Social Services. He relayed that at the Social Services Grant budget review, he voted "no" to doubling the Town of Waterford's monetary contribution for the Homeless Hospitality Center of New London. He did so due to the lack of proper documentation from the organization to justify why they were asking for double the amount of the request from FY24. In comparison to other towns, the amount requested from Waterford was not substantiated as needs based but rather a general request for as much money as the organization felt the Town of Waterford would possibly agree to.

**Motion** by Robert Tuneski and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to tentatively approve the Social Services Grants budget request for FY24/25 in the total amount of \$100,250.

**Vote: 5-1-0**

**No: Ron Fedor**

**Motion: Passed**

**7. Youth Services Budget:**

Human Services Administrator for Youth & Family Services (& Senior Services), Dani Gorman, began discussion of the department's budget request by making key points from their FY24 budget and some highlights of the FY25 budget.

Ron Fedor and Dave Peabody questioned the actual need to add a 2<sup>nd</sup> Program Coordinator position to the department. The board requested data to better inform its members of the growth of the department's programs and the number of youth being served – or turned away – due to staffing. Joseph Trelli will provide data, working alongside BOF Chairman Glenn Patterson, to best inform the BOF of the needs of the additional staff. This data will be submitted to the BOF before the final budget hearing date. Ms. Gorman added that the increases in program attendees is significant and there are many on waiting lists for upcoming sessions.

Robert Tuneski asked if the Youth & Family Services programs align with those of other town departments and what the department is doing to help streamline programs in a unified manner with other town departments (namely Recreation & Parks, Senior Services, and the Library). Administrator Gorman responded that Youth & Family Services, Senior Services, and Recreation and Parks align with their missions and services directed with mental health in mind to provide service to their resident's specific needs. Programs are built on data to meet the needs of the consumers with pinpoint accuracy. They are not created in hopes of people attending, they are created by need of their audiences. Mr. Tuneski queried if there was a way to be sure there is no overlap with other town departments. Ms. Gorman answered that they all speak often to make sure services are not duplicated. In Waterford, she stated the programs for Youth & Family Services are created at their department. They do not take the ideas from the other departments to run at Youth & Family Services. Their hope is to strengthen the partnership with the Library in the upcoming year.

Glenn Patterson noted there is an amount of money coming from the Opioid Funds awarded by the state. Administrator Gorman acknowledged it is a sizable amount annually for approximately thirty years.

**Motion** by Robert Tuneski and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to tentatively approve the Youth Services budget request for FY24/25 in the total amount of \$294,579.

**Vote: 6-0-0**

**Motion: Passed**

**8. Senior Citizen Commission Budget:**

Dani Gorman, Human Services Administration, Youth & Family Services/Senior Services opened the discussion with an introduction to her staff along with a few points from the FY25 Budget request.

Chairman Patterson opened with a question regarding the Opioid Funding that is present in the budget backup but not listed as a line item available as income in the Senior Services budget summary. Ms. Gorman answered that the \$48,000 available and listed in the Youth & Family Services budget summary is also available at any time for Senior Services. Kimberly Allen, Finance Director for the Town of Waterford, clarified that the Town has made a decision that these funds from the state are only available to Youth & Family Services as well as Senior Services.

Board members asked a series of questions about the need for the new position of Intake Specialist for Senior Services. Is it not a secretarial position but the department did not like the title of “secretary”? What is the demand to require the new position? Does the Intake Specialist require specific training to qualify themselves as a specialist for this type of work? Is there liability for the town by not requiring specific educational and/or work experience? Will there be a need for a secretary in the near future? Can part-time workers help rather than hiring a full-time worker?

Dani Gorman responded to these questions noting that the intake specialist does some clerical work but the focus of their job is to manage the intake of clients for mental health support. The need for mental health support has increase exponentially for youth and seniors due to post-Sandy Hook trauma, the impacts of the COVID experience, and drug dependency/misuse. She added there will be no liability for the town as the individual hired will be fully qualified and there will be no need for a secretarial position in the future. Gorman also stated that part-time help is difficult to maintain and consistency from this individual will be key for serving their clients.

**Motion** by Robert Tuneski and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to tentatively approve the Senior Citizen Commission budget request for FY24/25 in the total amount of \$481,248.

**Vote: 6-0-0**

**Motion: Passed**

**9. Recreation and Parks Budget:**

Opening remarks from the Director of Recreation & Parks, Ryan McNamara. He noted that the FY25 Budget Request was put together with specific

recommendations given by the BOF last year and he thanked the board for their guidance.

Dave Peabody noted the recommendations were utilized and the budget request package was easier to navigate this year. Ron Fedor asked why another full time position (Assistant Director) was needed by the department when in the past years in Recreation and Parks, seemingly, there were too many workers for too little work. Director McNamara responded that his time heading the department began with two employees (himself and an administrative assistant) then added Tim Cieplik as Program Coordinator (moved to Assistant Director in the FY25 Budget eliminating the Program Coordinator position) and another part-time clerk. Together, they are still reviewing how the department works currently and how it can work in the future as scheduling of town's sports, field maintenance, grounds keeping, and programs are pulling the Program Coordinator and the Director from other main duties. The future reinstatement of program coordinator would be best for the department so that Director McNamara, specifically, can better focus his efforts throughout the town in person.

Robert Tuneski asked if the landscaping that Recreation & Parks overlap with the library's maintenance plan? What services does the Rec & Parks provide to the library property? Director McNamara said Rec & Parks maintains all outside work up to the building. Mr. Tuneski asked if the director was aware that some grounds keeping was being done at the library that did not involve Rec & Parks? Director McNamara answered yes, and he notified the Library that due to Union contracts, any work being done without a union member must be done by submitting a special form which was not completed at the time of the work being done by that individual.

Mr. Tuneski continued by asking if any services overlap with those offered by the Library. Mr. McNamara responded by saying "yes" giving examples like small concert venues and a few other program offerings. Mr. Tuneski asked if there was any communication with the library prior to these offerings being scheduled. Director McNamara responded that some collaboration took place and some were not scheduled with collaboration. Mr. Tuneski pointed out that it would be in the best interest of the town if all of these departments worked together properly to offer our Waterford community quality programs and to maximize the benefits of these town services at minimal cost to our residents. Director McNamara agreed and he said he would welcome a more cohesive union with other departments in the future.

Michael Rocchetti asked what department actually takes care of the Waterford High School baseball field. Mr. McNamara answered that the Rec & Parks crew cares for the field but not the irrigation. They have laid down a new material in the infield this year to better suit ball play. Mr. Rocchetti also asked about Waterford Town Beach passes and their associated costs. He wondered if the

beach pass costs have been compared to other towns such as East Lyme. Tim Cieplik replied that they do not know the actual costs of the East Lyme passes but made a comparison to New London's Ocean Beach Park. Mr. Rocchetti asked if Rec & Parks knows the actual number of resident vs. non-resident patrons who attend Waterford Beach daily. Director McNamara said the staff uses a "clicker" at the gate to document non-residents but didn't have that number available. He was able to provide the number of beach passes sold last year: 476 Senior passes; 1236 Resident (1<sup>st</sup> household sticker); 621 Resident (discounted additional household stickers). Mr. Rocchetti provided the cost of East Lyme beach passes:

Resident Season Pass: \$60 (Waterford \$25 – 2<sup>nd</sup> \$11)

Non-Resident Season Pass: \$200 (Waterford \$125)

Resident Weekday Pass: \$20 (Waterford \$2.00)

Non-Resident Weekday Pass: \$45 (Waterford \$25)

Resident Weekend Pass: \$30 (Waterford \$6)

Non-Resident Weekday Pass: \$55 (Waterford \$35)

Mr. Rocchetti expressed concern about people crossing the channel from Ocean Beach Park and those who enter through a path from Camp Harkness. Director McNamara stated a staff member was monitoring those coming from the channel side and was unaware of anyone entering without paying from the Camp Harkness side. He said he and Mr. Cieplik will work on collecting data to give to Board to assess the costs and compare to other local towns.

Glenn Patterson requested maintenance costs vs. repairs to help the town understand the work being done on the Recreation and Parks Fleet assets. The town garage should have all of the information as they do the work on the fleet from Recreation & Parks. This data should include all equipment, mowers, and tractors. Director McNamara will do so.

**Motion** by Robert Tuneski and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to tentatively approve the Recreation and Parks budget request for FY24/25 in the total amount of **\$1,485,080**.

**Vote: 6-0-0**

**Motion: Passed**

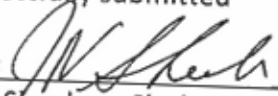
10. Adjournment:

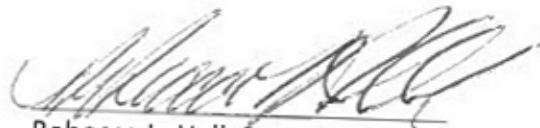
Motion by Robert Tuneski and seconded by Michael Rocchetti to adjourn the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance at 8:51 p.m.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

Respectfully submitted

  
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John Sheehan, Clerk

  
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Rebecca L. Hall, Secretary